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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Merchant Sailor's Comments on Foreign Broadcasts to Poland: Reception/Contents

PLACE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)DATE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)

DATE (OF INFO)

25X1A

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

RESPONSIVE TO	
1	2
CD NO.	
DO/C NO.	
ORR NO.	
DAS NO.	
OCI NO.	

DATE DISTR. 24 Sep 1953

NO. OF PAGES 3

NO. OF ENCLs.

SUPP. TO
REPORT NO.

25X1

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Sources of Foreign News

I read the CP paper Glos Szczecinski, also Dziennik Bałtycki and the magazines Express Ilustrowany Kurier Szczecinski and Szpilki. These contain little news. A better source were the foreign radios - MADRID, VOA, RFE, PARIS, BBC, ANKARA- as well as the domestic radio. Of course, friends in the Merchant Marine supply information.

Radio Sets

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"Radios can be bought in Poland, but they are expensive: a Pionier costs from 980 to 1200 zl; foreign makes are more expensive. Spare parts for Pionier are available, although hard to get, but it is absolutely impossible to get a spare part for a Philips set. The repair shops try to repair the Philips set with Pionier spare parts.

"Everybody must register his radio set. Otherwise it may be confiscated. The license is quite cheap - only 7 zl per month.

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Reception

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[redacted] Listening to foreign stations is not prohibited officially, but the authorities do all in their power to discourage it by jamming and propaganda. If one is caught listening, one's name goes on a black list.

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[redacted] the following stations broadcast in Polish:

MADRID- Three or four times a week until 1952; then I had to give it up because of the strong jamming. I had listened to it on the 142 m. wave and reception had been quite good. Since 1952, the station has been jammed as if by a running motor, audibility has become nil.

BBC--- Three or four times a week, over the 31 m band. Reception is quite decent, and the 3 p.m. broadcast is practically not jammed at all.

VOA--- Three or four times per week, over the 31, 49 and 16 m band. It is jammed of course, but it is possible to hear the broadcasts. I have received the VOA broadcasts direct from the US and also over European stations. The European broadcasts are much more audible, clearer and less disturbed by noises. I listened to VOA at 5:15 p.m.

RFE---- Three or four times per week, over the 25 m band. Audibility was bad at first but grew better. Since the end of 1952 the RFE broadcasts have been jammed from a special steel tower in Lodz.

PARIS-- Three or four times per week over the 41 m band. Until 1952 the reception was very good but now this station is jammed too and audibility is only medium.

ANKARA-- Three or four times a week over the 41 m band. Reception is quite good.

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Criticism

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"Political news is most popular, whichever station broadcasts it. I used to compare the broadcasts of various stations on an important subject. I was favorably impressed when the French admitted in their broadcasts that there had been strikes in French mines. In 1951, when there was a strike in the Silesian mines, nobody in Poland heard about it. Foreign broadcasts helped me understand the lies of the Communist system. I had always been anti-Russian but not so decidedly anti-Communist.

"Until Radio MADRID became so jammed in 1952 I felt it gave the best Polish broadcasts. The people spoke sincerely, in simple language such as farmers use. They were aggressive and did not hesitate to use abuse and vulgarity to attack the Communist rulers of Poland and the Soviets. The Polish listeners liked this frankness. Now it is impossible to hear Radio MADRID.

"I used to listen regularly to the youth programs on VOA as did many of my pals. I wish that VOA would broadcast more sincere messages in simpler language (chlopskie slowa) so that listeners in Poland would feel that the Poles abroad were speaking to them directly in their own colloquialisms and slang. I should like to hear more about the life of Poles in the US and what has happened to the leaders of the emigration there.

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10. "The humorists Toriko and Szczepz on PARIS 8 were extremely popular. Everybody was sorry when the French stopped ~~these~~ broadcasts because of Warsaw jamming. I think PARIS broadcast too much music and not enough news. The advertisements about lost people are dull and should be broadcast on special programs, not during the time scheduled for news. The French should have more anti-Communist propaganda and come out more firmly against Communism."
11. "The RFE political news is timely. It gives excellent reports about such international subjects as the Korean War, the US presidential elections and Eisenhower's policy. It unmasks the Communist propaganda lies, especially about the Polish armed forces, broadcast by the Polish stations. RFE gave the most complete broadcasts against agricultural collectivization. I liked the broadcasts about recent refugees, eg the broadcast in which Eugeniusz Halfer told about conditions on the JEDNOSC ROBOTNICZA."
12. "The BBC broadcasts contain good reports for workers and miners. There was a good speaker who compared British and Polish trade unions: The British unions fight for a better living standard for the workers; the Polish unions help the regime to exploit the workers. I should like to learn about British history and more about current British policy, particularly towards the Poles. I don't think the BBC language was too 'educated'."
13. "ANKARA broadcasts good, objective foreign news reviews."
14. "It is difficult to say who listens to which foreign station in present-day Poland. Generally, the intellectuals and workers listen to the BBC, the young people to VOA and RFE (both have youth programs). Political news and satires are universally popular. Young people like musical broadcasts."

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